

## MONSANTO'S GE SOY MONOPOLY UPHELD

In a jaw-dropping affirmation of Monsanto's monopoly control over commodity crops, one of the world's most notorious patents for genetically engineered crops was upheld on May 6 by the European Patent Office (EPO) in Munich—this despite a nine-year battle by civil society (and industry) to have it revoked.

European Patent No. 301,749, granted in March 1994, is an exceptionally broad "species patent" which grants gene giant Monsanto an exclusive monopoly over all forms of GE soybean varieties and seeds, irrespective of the genes used or the transformation technique employed.

The patent, attacked as immoral and technically invalid by food security advocates worldwide, was vigorously opposed by Monsanto itself until it purchased the original patent-holder (Agracetus) in 1996 and switched sides to make the soybean species patent a major ingredient in its global recipe for crop monopoly. Monsanto now controls 100% of the world's genetically engineered soybeans, covering 36.5 million hectares in 2002.

The ETC Group (The Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration, formerly RAFI) has been opposing the patent for nearly a decade. It regards the maintenance of this patent as a dangerous precedent for other broad claims on



emerging new technologies, in particular nanotechnology—the atomic manipulation of matter to create new molecular forms.

"We fear that the EPO decision on Monsanto's soybean patent gives comfort to those who want to establish ever wider legal claims—including matter monopolies," emphasised Jim Thomas of ETC Group's Oxford, UK, office.

"Monsanto may have won an entire species, but others are seeking to monopolise entire elements of nature. Atomic-level manufacturing provides new opportunities for sweeping monopoly control over both living and non-living matter."

(Source: ETC Group news release, May 7, 2003, <http://www.etcgroup.org>)

## MURDOCH COMPANY TO MIND BRITISH OFFICIAL SECRETS?

In an official British "written ministerial statement" quietly released late on Friday evening, March 14, while MPs and the media were focused on the approaching conflict with Iraq, the Junior Defence Minister, Dr Lewis Moonie, confirmed that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) had decided to privatise the storage of top-secret Ministry files.

The statement, published in Hansard (column 29WS), also confirms that the preferred bidder is TNT Express Services, owned by the media magnate Rupert Murdoch, proprietor of the London *Times* and *Sun* newspapers.

Within two years, TNT will relocate the records service of the MoD and 13 other government departments—including the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Public Record Office (PRO), the Metropolitan Police Service and the Lord Chancellor's Department—from secure MoD warehouses at Bourne Avenue, Hayes, Middlesex, to new facilities in the Midlands.

The site will provide secure storage for a possible 200 linear kilometres of official paper records, and TNT will also be responsible for "the provision of records management and archiving services" for a 25-year period.

(Source: Intelligence, no. 420, April 7, 2003)

## NRO WANTS TO "KNOW EVERYTHING"

At a March 12 hearing of the US Senate Armed Services Committee, Peter B. Teets, Director of the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) which develops, launches and operates US spy satellites, said: "Our goal is transparency. We want the ability to see everything and know everything, while simultaneously denying our adversaries both the ability to do the same, and the knowledge that such capabilities are being used against them."

"We have 12 national security space launches scheduled for 2003, compared to only one conducted in 2002," he added.

Mr Teets, who is also an Under-Secretary of the Air Force, provided a rare public description of "offensive counter-space" (OCS) programs for disabling other



countries' satellites.

"We currently have two OCS projects underway. The first is the Counter Communication System (CCS), a capability intended to disrupt satellite-based communications used by an enemy for military C3, and scheduled for 2004. The second is the Counter Surveillance Reconnaissance System (CSRS), intended to impair an enemy's ability to obtain targeting, battle damage assessment and information by denying their use of satellite imagery with reversible, non-damaging effects," Mr Teets testified.

At a March 12 Air Force press briefing on "military space", the Air Force Director of Space Preparations, Major-General Judd Blaisdell, said: "We are so dominant in space that I pity a country that would come up against us."

(Source: Secrecy News, from the FAS Project on Government Secrecy, vol. 2003, no. 23, March 18, 2003, <http://www.fas.org>)

## SADDAM WAS A KEY CIA ASSET FROM THE LATE 1950s

While many have thought that Saddam Hussein first became involved with US intelligence agencies at the start of the September 1980 Iran-Iraq War, his first contacts with US officials date back to 1959 when he was part of a CIA-authorized six-man squad tasked with assassinating the then Iraqi Prime Minister, General Abd al-Karim Qasim.

In July 1958, Qasim overthrew the Iraqi monarchy in what one former US diplomat described as "a horrible orgy of bloodshed". In the mid-1950s, Iraq had been quick to join the anti-Soviet Baghdad Pact which was to defend the region, and whose members included Turkey, Britain, Iran and Pakistan. But the US paid little attention to Qasim's bloody regime until his sudden decision to withdraw from the pact in 1959. Washington watched in marked dismay as Qasim began to buy arms from the Soviet Union and put his own domestic communists into ministry positions of "real power", according to a former senior US State Department official.

The assassination was set for October 7, 1959, but it was completely botched. Qasim escaped death by hiding on the floor of his car, but Saddam, whose calf had been grazed by a fellow would-be assassin, escaped to Tikrit, thanks to CIA and Egyptian intelligence agents. Saddam then crossed into Syria and was transferred by Egyptian agents to Beirut, where the

CIA paid for his apartment and put him through a brief training course. The agency then helped him get to Cairo.

One former US government official, who knew Saddam at the time, said that even then Saddam "was known as having no class; he was a thug, a cut-throat".

The agency quickly moved into action. Noting that the Ba'ath Party was hunting down Iraq's Communists, the CIA provided the submachinegun-toting Iraqi National Guardsmen with lists of suspected Communists who were then jailed, interrogated and summarily executed.

Agency sources told UPI that the mass killings, presided over by Saddam Hussein, took place at Qasr al-Nehayat—literally, the Palace of the End.

(Source: by Richard Sale, UPI, April 10, 2003, <http://www.upi.com/view.cfm?StoryID=20030410-070214-6557r>)

## EU CHALLENGES AUSTRALIA'S QUARANTINE RULES

The European Union has decided to request Australia to enter into WTO formal consultations on its quarantine system for imports of agricultural products.

EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy said: "Australia has built a quarantine system which is highly efficient at blocking the import of agricultural products into this country. We believe this system flagrantly breaches WTO rules, despite Australia's constant claims to be the only beacon of free agricultural trade."

The rules which the EU considers the Australian quarantine system breaches are set out in the Agreement on Sanitary and

Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), which covers regimes dealing with human, animal and plant health.

Some of the market access problems faced by EU exporters include: an outright ban on the import of a range of agricultural products such as fruit and vegetables; extremely long and complex risk assessment procedures; and extremely restrictive conditions applied to imports, even when access is finally granted.

Australia's quarantine system has been challenged in the past. In 1998, following a complaint by Canada and the USA, the WTO ruled that the Australian quarantine system for salmon violated WTO rules.

(Source: EU Commission release, March 31, 2003, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/miti/dispute/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/miti/dispute/index_en.htm), via [StopWTORound@yahoo.com](mailto:StopWTORound@yahoo.com))

## EARTH'S FIELDS SOON TO FLIP

In recent years, the Earth's magnetic field has been behaving in ways not previously seen in the admittedly short time it has been monitored.

The magnetic field not only shields us from harmful cosmic rays but also funnels charged particles shed by the Sun towards the magnetic poles, where they can produce beautiful auroral displays. But it is getting weaker.

David Kerridge, of the British Geological Survey, told BBC News Online: "There is strong evidence that the field is decreasing by about five per cent per century."

Some researchers suggest that it could be the start of a geomagnetic reversal,



"That's the 93<sup>rd</sup> successful test of the Anti-Gravity machine.  
It's also the 93<sup>rd</sup> prototype we'll never see again."

when the strength of the Earth's magnetic field decreases and then returns a few thousand years later with the north and south magnetic poles reversed.

Magnetic measurements made on the surface suggest that a region of the Earth's core under South Africa is of a different polarity to the rest of the magnetic field in the core. It may grow and initiate a flip, or it may die down.

(Source: *BBC News Online*, March 27, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/sci/tech/2889127.stm>)

## EU CALLS FOR INVESTIGATION OF ASPARTAME DANGERS

The European Parliament has called for an investigation of aspartame (aka NutraSweet, Equal, Canderel, E951, Spoonful, Benevia, etc.) as part of a drive to make sure that foodstuffs and drinks consumed in the European Union are safe.

A document from the European Parliament says the justification is that: "...the use of aspartame increases the exposure to its metabolites methanol/ formaldehyde and phenylalanine and is reported to provoke headaches, nausea and allergic reactions, especially in the case of vulnerable persons. Its widespread use should therefore be re-evaluated by the Commission and the relevant scientific committees, taking into account all available data and respecting the precautionary principle. An historical evaluation is required as there seems to be evidence that original studies did not prove the safety of aspartame."

There is also a call for proposals to improve the labelling of products containing aspartame, and the Parliament wants the new directive to be implemented in the member states within a year of its entry into force. There is concern about a lack of labels warning of health risks to the pregnant woman and the foetus—and rightly so, since aspartame is an abortifacient and a teratogen. It also stimulates prolactin. It is an endocrine-disrupting chemical. It also changes the menses, triggering infertility. A woman who goes off aspartame and gets pregnant may lose her baby if she goes back onto it.

The manufacturer and the FDA have steadfastly refused to put a warning on aspartame, even though they have full knowledge of how it can destroy the foetus or trigger birth defects.

(Source: from Betty Martini, *Mission Possible International*, April 12, 2003, <http://www.dorway.com>)

## SWISS CANTON STOPS FLUORIDATION AFTER 41 YEARS

On April 9, the Great Council of the Swiss Canton Basel-Stadt, on a motion brought forward by the Commission for Health and Social Issues, totally repealed the "Resolution of the Great Council concerning the introduction of fluoridation of drinking water for the control of caries". The fluoridation of drinking water, initiated by Basel-Stadt on May 2, 1962, was thus stopped after 41 years. The reasons were:

- The preventive effect of the fluoridation of drinking water could not be

proved by any study. When specialists do not succeed in producing definite proof in 40 years, the practice has to be abandoned.

- In spite of the fluoridation of drinking water, dental caries have been on the increase in children.

- The danger of fluorosis is played down; indeed, there is no discussion about fluorosis of the bones. The fluoridation of drinking water is particularly problematic in the case of young children and babies.

- Less than 1% of the fluoride in drinking water is actually used for "prevention of caries"; more than 99% of the fluoridated water is used for washing, cleaning, industrial production, etc., and thus only pollutes the environment—a very undesirable imbalance.

(Source: *Forum for Responsible Application of Science*, Basel, April 27, 2003, <http://www.nux.ch>, via <http://npwa.freeserve.co.uk/>)

## PENTAGON STAGED SADDAM STATUE'S FALL

One of the "most memorable images of the war" in Iraq was the footage and photographs showing a crowd of Iraqis pulling down the statue of Saddam Hussein in Fardus Square in Baghdad on April 9, after US armed forces invaded the capital.

The BBC hailed the video and photos as recording a "momentous event", with the media being "a witness to history". Bush declared it "a historic moment". For Donald Rumsfeld, these images were "breathhtaking". *But this image was staged.* The spin-doctors of the US media and the Pentagon produced a close-action video of the destruction of the statue that was supposed to be proof of a massive civilian uprising against the Iraqi government.

A Reuters photojournalist exposed this media event as a sham. The Marines had cleared out the area and ringed Fardus Square (across the street from the Palestine Hotel, where foreign journalists are based) with tanks. A hand-picked group of approx. 150 Iraqis, with some Marines, was allowed into the sealed-off area. A US military vehicle pulled down the statue.

The Pentagon wanted journalists to sell this occupation as "liberation" to people in the US and around the world. In fact, the United States Armed Forces psychological operations motto boasts: "Win the mind, win the day!"

The wrecking of the Saddam statue was part of a psy-ops media campaign.

(Source: *Workers World News Service*, April 24, 2003, <http://www.workers.org>)



"Place another Positions Vacant ad in the newspaper for our Black Holes dept. Our staff there keep disappearing."

## LANDMARK WARNING ON MERCURY USE IN DENTISTRY

For the first time anywhere in the USA, dentists will be required to post a warning about the dangers of mercury in their dental fillings. On January 7, a California Superior Court judge finalised the language for the warning and ordered the California Dental Association to send it to dentists by March 9. The warning reads as follows:

"Notice to Patients: Proposition 65 Warning: Dental Amalgam, used in many dental fillings, causes exposure to mercury, a chemical known to the state of California to cause birth defects or other reproductive harm. Root canal treatments and restorations, including fillings, crowns and bridges, use chemicals known to the state of California to cause cancer. The US Food and Drug Administration has studied the situation and approved for use all dental restorative materials. Consult your dentist to determine which materials are appropriate for your treatment."

The warning is the result of a lawsuit filed by the law offices of Shawn Khorrani on behalf of As You Sow, a not-for-profit foundation dedicated to advocacy and activism in the public interest.

(Source: *MercuryPoisoned.com*)

## VICTORY FOR GULF WAR SYNDROME VETERANS

Gulf War syndrome campaigners were yesterday [May 5] claiming victory after the UK Ministry of Defence announced it would not appeal against a ruling by the war pensions tribunal, accepting a link between the condition and vaccinations given to the armed forces.

Alex Izett, 33, a former lance-corporal who developed brittle bone disease after the 1991 conflict—but never went to the Gulf—said it was a "watershed" moment in the battle to have the condition officially recognised.

The decision by the MoD not to challenge the ruling that Mr Izett's osteoporosis was caused by a cocktail of drugs before his planned deployment could have significant implications for thousands of veterans suffering from the syndrome. Because Mr Izett did not go to the Gulf, the ruling adds weight to the veterans' argument that their ailments have been caused by the injections of untested and experimental vaccines they were given, and not by anything they may have encountered in the field.

(Source: *The Guardian, May 6, 2003*)

## BEHIND WASHINGTON'S DEMAND TO LIFT IRAQ SANCTIONS

The issue of lifting the sanctions on Iraq is shaping up as the next big confrontation in the UN Security Council, which now has control over at least US\$30 billion held in its Oil for Food accounts—funds accumulated from the sale of Iraqi oil during the sanctions regime. The US has appointed itself the overseer of Iraq and the force that will hand-pick a new government. But the sanctions prevent the money from going to Iraq. So the US wants an end to sanctions so that these billions of dollars can be turned over to a US-administered government in Iraq.

In addition, Iraqi money worth billions of dollars has been frozen since August 1990 in accounts around the world. An end to sanctions could be a first step in making this money available to a US-controlled "Iraqi government", which would then turn it over to US corporations that have been awarded contracts for the "reconstruction" of Iraq. The US campaign to end the sanctions and turn the billions in withheld Iraqi funds over to itself, the occupier, is piracy in its most blatant form.

France, Russia and China all have veto power over whether to end the sanctions. Various countries on the Security Council have reminded Washington that sanctions cannot be lifted until UN weapons inspectors confirm that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction, which diplomatically throws in Washington's face the same fraudulent excuse that the US government used for 13 years to continue the sanctions.

France has further enraged the Bush administration by proposing that civilian sanctions could be "suspended" for humanitarian reasons. By stating that it was not for "lifting" sanctions, it was reminding Washington that the web of sanctions the US had spun gives the UN Security Council control over all of Iraq's future oil revenues. This is also Russia's position.

As long as sanctions officially remain in place, the revenue from all Iraqi oil sold will continue to be deposited into UN accounts. Billions of dollars are at stake in future contracts. The countries on the Security Council that had joined the US in imposing sanctions are not so anxious to turn over these accumulated funds, the bidding on all reconstruction contracts and the future oil revenues to the conquerors.

Part of the reason why Washington does not want the United Nations involved in any way in Iraq is that the Bush administration does not want any other financial claims on its unilateral theft. Until it is clear who has legal title to Iraq's oil, it will be difficult for the US to sell the oil on the world market. Before the 1991 war, Iraqi oil revenue was worth more than US\$20 billion a year.

When the Pentagon started bombing in January 1991, it chose its targets to sharpen the deadly impact of the sanctions. The US consciously destroyed the water, sanitation, sewage and pumping facilities, along with food-processing plants, pharmaceutical plants and medical facilities. At the end of the massive US 40-day bombing campaign, Iraq withdrew from Kuwait. This should have ended the reason for the UN sanctions. But as a condition of the ceasefire, the US demanded that sanctions remain until the UN Security Council had confirmed that Iraq had destroyed any unconventional weapons it may have obtained.

This became the excuse for a protracted struggle to demand the right to send thousands of inspectors into Iraq to confirm that Iraq had no such weapons. Despite over 9,000 inspections, the continuing threat of US veto has kept these starvation sanctions in place for 13 years. By 1995, a UN Food and Agriculture Organization report confirmed that 567,000 children under the age of five had died as a direct result of the continued UN sanctions. A growing global mobilisation demanding that sanctions be lifted created a radical shift in world public opinion.

As world outrage mounted, the US shifted its public relations approach. In an attempt to give a humanitarian cover to its brutal policy, it pushed through the Oil for Food Program. This program allowed Iraq to sell a limited amount of its oil and buy food and medicine from the revenue. The UN Security Council, under a special committee called the 661 Committee, would control all the revenue and review every contract for supplies that Iraq would receive. Some 34 per cent of the Iraqi Oil for Food revenue went to the Kuwaiti monarchy and other "victims" of the 1991 war. ExxonMobil received \$200 million in "war reparations" from the Oil For Food funds, which were supposed to feed starving Iraqi children. Billions of dollars also went to the UN to administer this program. A multibillion-dollar bureaucracy was created that guaranteed lucrative contracts to many countries.

For the past six years, the US and UK representatives on the 661 Committee have denied, delayed or obstructed most of the contracts submitted by Iraq. Under US pressure, the committee denied over 90 per cent of Iraq's contracts for the repair of water/sewage treatment and irrigation projects.

Because of this continual obstruction, billions of dollars from oil sales were never released for Iraq's desperate needs but continued to be held in UN accounts. These funds, along with future oil revenue, are what US corporate power wants undisputed control over.

(Source: by Sara Flounders, *Workers World, May 8, 2003*, <http://www.workers.org>)